

of ideas finding expression in human sounds) proceeds sub-consciously and we cannot control this source of our life, because we cannot create ourselves. The myth of the Tower of Babel is true in its substance; language is a device of Mara, the creator of "No" and "But" <sup>(1)</sup>.

To speak of and handle a language without combining with it the soul-life of the people who speak that language, is of no avail. That would mean dealing with phantoms only, or with the bones and not with the blood of the living body. Language is never anything apart from the heart of the people, out of which it grows spontaneously. You can acquire a language by learning it, but you cannot understand a language except by living it: and *that* means that you do not understand the language, but the people whose soul is expressed by it.

Polyglottism is a dangerous sport, leading often only to conceit and illusion of mastery over others. A superficial knowledge of a language is not only waste of time but actually dangerous.

As language reflects the human mind it is a manifestation of human error. We constantly misunderstand each other owing to the imperfect expression of our thoughts, since we only deal with likenesses, which are usually illusions. Language is a mirror of human development as it ought *not* to be; it is by no means normative in indicating how things *should* be. Language is the spontaneous reflection of man's moods and fears, it is not a creation of conscious mind; otherwise no misunderstanding would be possible. On these grounds language is one of the poorest and most imperfect means of communication.

Language is the subject of many branches of human learning. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized. Here, however, we are concerned with one branch only, regarded as the supreme one because it is scientific, and that is philology. To give a rough, improvised definition of philology, we may say it is a rational activity of the human mind, dealing primarily with the analysis and comparison of sounds which as language have already become rational (*i.e.*, have been invested with meaning), with their structures and combinations. It neither regards the psychology of anthropomorphic expression underlying the word, nor its philosophic value as an expression of soul-life.

I must explain what I mean by the three terms scientific, anthropomorphic and philosophic. They indicate aspects of looking at the universe, or views of the world. I group these in their ascending order of value, in their bearing upon soul-culture and man's relation to cosmic-creative foundations, the first one being farthest removed from Life, and therefore from Truth, but valued most highly at the present time. They are:

1. The *scientific* view, which in order to "explain" things has to kill first and then treat its object with the abstractions of weight and measure. Man is in this view only a figure in statistics. It is the microscopic view where succession in time dominates everything.

<sup>(1)</sup> And yet Sanskrit is called the language of the gods, and are not the forty-nine letters of the Devanagari alphabet spoken of as forty-nine abodes, each of a deva?—Eds.